

1. In a system where a user performs a transaction with multiple entities, and wherein one or more of the multiple entities generates a notification that updates a status of the transaction for the user, a method for coordinating the notifications that are generated by one or more of the multiple entities and sent to the user, the method comprising:

providing a notification interface, wherein each of the multiple entities that generates a notification is able to communicate with the notification interface;

receiving notifications from the multiple entities that generated a notification at the notification interface, wherein each notification comprises an identifier that enables the notification interface to uniquely identify the user;

identifying the user from the identifier such that each notification may be sent to the user; and

sending the notifications to a router that determines how to deliver the notifications to the user.

2. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the act of providing a notification interface further comprises an act of providing the multiple entities with access to an application programming interface of the notification interface.

3. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the act of receiving notifications from each of the multiple entities that generated a notification at the notification interface further comprises an act of authenticating each of the multiple entities that sends a notification to the notification interface.

4. A method as defined in claim 1, further comprising:

receiving, by at least one of the multiple entities, the identifier from the user;  
and  
accessing the at least one of the multiple entities using an authentication service that authenticates the user.

5. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the notification comprises one or more of:

an identifier field that contains one of a user identifier or a subscription identifier;

a content field that contains a status of the transaction;

an action field that contains an object, wherein the object is a URL;

a priority field indicating a priority of the notification;

a category field indicating a category of the notification; and

an authenticate field that allows a sender of the notification to be authenticated.

6. A method as defined in claim 5, further comprising determining how to deliver the notifications to the user by consulting one or more of:

user preferences, user devices, presence information of the user, the priority field of the notification, and the category field of the notification.

7. A method as defined in claim 6, wherein the act of sending the notifications to the user further comprises an act of identifying the user from the user identifier or the subscription identifier.

8. A method as defined in claim 7, further comprising delivering, by the router, the notifications to the user.

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9. In a system where a user performs a transaction that involves one or more entities, wherein at least some the one or more entities produce notifications intended for the user that provide an update concerning the transaction, a notification system for delivering the notification from the one or more entities that generate notifications to the user, the notification system comprising:

a notification interface that receives notifications from the one or more entities, wherein each notification comprises:

an identifier that enables the notification system and the one or more entities to uniquely identify the user such that the notifications are delivered to the user;

the update concerning the transaction;

and

a router that delivers the notifications to a user, wherein the router consults one or more of user preferences, user status, user presence, and user devices to determine how to deliver the notifications to the user.

10. A notification system as defined in claim 9, wherein the notification interface comprises an application programming interface that is known to each of the one or more entities.

11. A notification system as defined in claim 9, wherein each of the one or more entities involved in the transaction with the user receives the identifier, wherein the identifier is included in each of the notifications that are generated by the one or more entities such that the notifications are coordinated.

12. A notification system as defined in claim 9, wherein the notification interface identifies the user from the identifier included in the notifications.

13. A notification system as defined in claim 9, wherein the identifier includes a user profile.

14. A notification system as defined in claim 9, wherein each notification further comprises:

an identifier field that contains one of a user identifier or a subscription identifier;

a content field that contains a status of the transaction;

an action field that contains a URL;

a priority field indicating a priority of the notification;

a category field indicating a category of the notification; and

an authenticate field that an authenticate field that enables the notification interface to authenticate the entity sending the notification.

15. In a system that includes a user, an authentication system and multiple entities, wherein the multiple entities are involved in a transaction with the user and wherein the user accesses at least one of the multiple entities using the authentication system that provides a user identifier that uniquely identifies the user to at least some of the multiple entities, wherein the user identifier is shared among one or more of the multiple entities, a method for delivering coordinated notifications to the user concerning the transaction, the method comprising acts of:

receiving each notification generated by the one or more entities at a notification interface, wherein the notification comprises:

the user identifier; and

content that updates the user about the transaction;

consulting one or more of user preferences, user status, and user preferences to determine a delivery method of the notification for each notification received by the notification interface;

sending each notification to the user according to the determined delivery method.

16. A method as defined in claim 15, wherein the act of receiving each notification generated by the one or more entities at a notification interface further comprises an act of providing an application programming interface.

17. A method as defined in claim 15, further comprising an act of the notification interface identifying the user from the authentication service using the user identifier.

18. A method as defined in claim 15, further comprising an act of the router identifying the user from the authentication service using the user identifier.

19. A method as defined in claim 15, wherein the act of consulting, by the router, one or more of user preferences, user status, and user preferences further comprises an act of the router consulting the category and the priority included in the notification to determine a delivery method of the notification.

20. A method as defined in claim 15, wherein the notification further comprises:  
a category and a priority of the transaction;  
an action field that permits the user to take an action regarding the transaction; and  
an authenticate field that enables the notification interface to authenticate the entity that generated the notification;

21. In a system including a user performing a transaction with multiple entities, wherein each of the multiple entities generates notifications that provide a status of the transaction to the user, a computer program product for implementing a method for delivering the notifications generated by the multiple entities to the users such that the notifications are coordinated, the computer program product comprising:

a computer readable medium having computer readable instructions for performing the method, the method comprising acts of:

providing a notification interface, wherein each of the multiple entities that generates a notification is able to communicate with the notification interface;

receiving notifications from the multiple entities that generated a notification at the notification interface, wherein each notification comprises an identifier that enables the notification interface to uniquely identify the user;

identifying the user from the identifier such that each notification may be sent to the user; and

sending the notifications to a router, wherein the router determines how to deliver the notifications to the user.

22. A computer program product as defined in claim 21, wherein the act of providing a notification interface further comprises an act of providing the multiple entities with access to an application programming interface of the notification interface.



23. A computer program product as defined in claim 21, wherein the act of receiving notifications from each of the multiple entities that generated a notification at the notification interface further comprises an act of authenticating each of the multiple entities that sends a notification to the notification interface.

24. A computer program product as defined in claim 21, further comprising:  
receiving, by at least one of the multiple entities, the identifier from the user;  
and  
accessing the at least one of the multiple entities using an authentication service that authenticates the user.

25. A computer program product as defined in claim 21, wherein the notification comprises one or more of:

an identifier field that contains one of a user identifier and a subscription identifier;  
a content field that contains a status of the transaction;  
an action field that contains a URL;  
a priority field indicating a priority of the notification;  
a category field indicating a category of the notification; and  
an authenticate field that allows a sender of the notification to be authenticated.

26. A computer program product as defined in claim 25, further comprising the router determining how to deliver the notifications to the user by consulting one or more of:

user preferences, user devices, presence information of the user, the priority field of the notification, and the category field of the notification.

27. A computer program product as defined in claim 26, wherein the act of sending the notifications to the user further comprises an act of identifying the user from the user identifier or the subscription identifier.

28. A computer program product as defined in claim 21, further comprising delivering, by the router, the notifications to the user.

29. In a system including one or more entities that are involved in a transaction with a user, wherein some of the one or more entities generate notifications to update the user concerning a status of the transaction, a data structure representing a notification, the data structure comprising:

an identifier field for storing an identifier that is unique with respect to the one or more entities such that each of the one or more entities that generates a notification is assured that the notification is intended for the same user as the notifications generated by other entities for the transaction; and

a content field that contains a status of the transaction between the user and the entity that generated the notification.

30. A data structure as defined in claim 29, further comprising an action field that contains an object.

31. A data structure as defined in claim 30, wherein the object is a URL that provides a link to the user.

32. A data structure as defined in claim 30, wherein the object allows the user to act on the status provided in the content field.

33. A data structure as defined in claim 29, further comprising a category field indicating a category of the notification.

34. A data structure as defined in claim 29, further comprising:

a priority field indicating a priority of the notification to the user; and

an authenticate field that allows a sender of the notification to be authenticated.

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